Distr.
LIMITED
E/ECWA/ID/WG.3/15
7 March 1975
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA
UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Meeting on Selected Branches of the
Food Processing Industry in the Middle East

Beirut, 3 - 8 March 1975

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Sugar Processing Industry

Taking into consideration that:

1. Sugar is a strategic commodity;

2. High imports make it vital to increase the production of the region;

3. There is a world shortage of sugar, with resulting high prices;

4. There is a tendency to increased consumption throughout the world with which supply is unlikely to keep pace;

5. Acute shortage could possibly lead to a situation where supplies would not be available regardless of availability of finance. The consumer would therefore be deprived of a basic commodity;

6. The sugar industry is vital in providing an essential ingredient to allied industries and also in the production of by-products;

7. This industry, in the agro-industrial context, is a very important factor in the employment of personnel at all levels;

8. This industry offers vast scope for co-operation within the Arab world especially as semi-finished products can be economically transported to be finished in countries lacking raw materials;

9. Existing processing plants, agricultural output and the planned projects in various countries of the region;

10. The actual constraints on production, insufficient skilled labour standards, high cost of production, storage and transportation facilities;

11. Existing studies and experience reveal that there is a great potential for increased production of raw materials in the region;

IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT:

1. Immediate action should be taken to improve the productive capacity of the region.

2. In view of the time required to increase raw material production, the possibility of establishing processing units operating with imported raw material but which can be extended to fully integrated plants where adequate local raw material will be produced, should be investigated.

3. In order to bridge the gap between production and consumption in the region and to eventually decrease the heavy reliance on import, a significant increase in the raw material production within the Arab countries has to eventually be achieved.

4. To arrive at an increased production of raw material, agronomical research in depth is necessary in prospective areas to identify the most promising areas, the right type of varieties with the highest yield possible and maximum sugar content. Due consideration must be paid to water requirements and availability.

5. Consideration should be given to the possibility to reduce the rotational crop cycle time in sugar beet growing. Special reference was made to successful results from growing sugar beet in cycle with certain protein rich crops, e.g. soyabean.

6. PROCESSING PLANTS: In the planning of processing plants the following factors must be taken into consideration:

(a) The economy of modern technology indicates that process plants should be of the maximum size consistent with the projected volume of raw material available. The size of the plant should ensure prompt processing of raw material to avoid waste due to deteriorating sugar content.

/...

(b) The location of the plant will ensure a minimum delay between harvesting and processing of the raw material. It is important to shorten the season of processing and full consideration should be given to maximum efficiency in harvesting and transport.

(c) Full consideration must be given to the latest technological developments in the production of thick juices. The advantages of this product are:

(i) The raw material process can be shortened without the necessity of a large expansion of the refining plant and hence capital investment is reduced;

(ii) Losses are reduced through prompt handling of raw material;

(iii) The semi-processed product can be handled and transported in bulk;

(iv) The product is available to strategically located refineries;

(v) Allied industries can benefit from the availability of a low price, good quality product easily handled and stored;

(vi) Supply of thick juice produced from either sugar cane or beet can be handled by the same refinery.

7. BY-PRODUCTS. Full consideration must be given to by-products in order to:

(i) Increase the profitability of sugar production;

(ii) Provide a basis for the establishment of industries utilizing these by-products, taking full advantage of such by-products as bagasse in the manufacture of paper, and an ingredient of animal feed. The full use of molasses to produce citric acid, yeast, alcohol liquid supplement for animal feed, etc.

(iii) Achieve a greater degree of self-sufficiency in such essential products as animal feed.

8. CO-OPERATION among countries for the realization of research and planning and implementation of the development programmes is essential.

/...

9. CO-ORDINATION: As the implementation of plans depends on the individual programmes of the various countries co-ordination of development plans is also essential.

10. Joint development programmes and enterprises should be promoted under bilateral agreements between member states and/or through the efforts of the Council of Arab Economic Unity.

11. ASSISTANCE:

(i) A programme should be initiated for reconstruction of the existing sugar industry;

(ii) A programme should be initiated for the establishment of new processing units;

(iii) An assistance programme as outlined above would incorporate existing research institutes and other appropriate bodies and will be assisted by international organizations such as ECWA, UNIDO, FAO, IDCAS, Arab Standards and Measurements, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the Arab Labour Organizatin.